

## WOOLWICH FAREWELL MASS

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019

Homily: Fr Tony Corcoran SM

Mary visits Elizabeth, bears the Word.

What motivates her – her desire to share the good news, to share her joy, and her compassion for her aged cousin, to be of service -- expressing the virtues of the intercession:

*-for the students and former students, staff and former staff of the college. That they may be beacons of service, clothing themselves in kindness, humility and patience.*

Virtues that have been instilled in this College community by the Marist Sisters, whose Constitutions call them to think, to judge, to feel, to act as Mary did... to be sensitive to the needs of all.

St Paul in Chapter 13 of his first letter to the Corinthians, gives us a number of characteristics of Christian love of neighbour, one in particular strikes me as extremely Marian, Marist.

*Love is not rude or impolite* positively expressed, it is gentle and thoughtful, --- “courteous”.

Pope Francis in his meditation on love wrote: Courtesy is a school of sensitivity and disinterestedness which requires a person to listen, to speak and at certain times to keep quiet. It is an essential requirement of love, ‘every human being is bound to live agreeably with those around him.

Into the world today – quick in judgmentalism, prejudices, rudeness, verbal abuse, bullying – in being beacons of loving service to others, we need to bring courtesy, a kind look, a kind word. There is little room in society for the gentleness of love.

A kind look - ‘loving kindness builds bonds, cultivates relationships, creates new networks of integration, knits a firm social fabric’. Those who love are capable of speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement. They are the words of Jesus, words that build up and not tear down. These are not words that demean, sadden, or show scorn.

Let us, acting like Mary, learn to imitate Jesus’ own courtesy and gentleness in our way of speaking to one another.